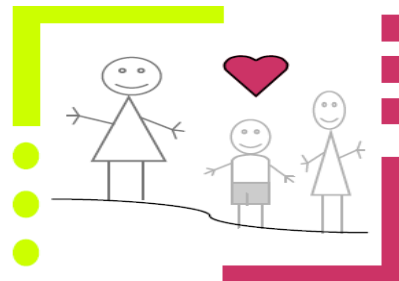


*If you have additional
questions regarding this
pamphlet or other questions
regarding child safety,
please contact:*

*Jefferson County Human
Services Department
1541 Annex Road
Jefferson WI 53549
(920)674-3105*

*The following is an
informational pamphlet
prepared by the*

*Jefferson County Citizen
Review Panel. It is intended
to provide basic information
and guidelines for residents
of Jefferson County.*



*Additional parenting
information and resources
can be found at:*

*[http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/bcs/
resources/parenting.htm](http://dcf.wisconsin.gov/bcs/resources/parenting.htm)*

**Jefferson County Human
Services Department**

*When Does
Discipline Become
Abuse?*



*A Guideline For
Discipline Of
Children*

Is It Discipline Or Abuse?

Some types of physical actions towards children are clearly abusive. However, the line between parental discipline and child abuse can be very fine. Some people strongly believe in spanking as a means of punishment whereas others consider it to be a form of child abuse. In Wisconsin, the use of physical discipline by a parent in and of itself is not against the law. However, if the physical discipline results in serious physical or emotional harm, the parent's action could constitute child abuse depending on the severity of the actions. Further, if the parent's actions resulted in a physical injury to the child then the action could constitute abuse.

Physical Abuse is defined as “physical injury inflicted on a child by other than accidental means.” Wisconsin Statutes 48.02(1)(a). “Physical injury” includes but is not limited to lacerations, fractured bones, burns, internal injuries, severe or frequent bruising or great bodily harm, as defined in s. 939.22(14). Wisconsin Statutes 48.02(14g).

Signs of Physical Abuse may include:

- Bruises or welts on the face, neck, chest, or back
- Injuries in the shape of an object, such as a belt or cord
- Bite marks, a black eye, broken bones
- Unexplained burns on hands, feet, or back
- Injuries that do not fit the explanation of how an injury occurred

While the use of physical discipline by a parent in and of itself is not against the law in Wisconsin, it is not recommended.

The following are some guidelines to consider when disciplining your child:

- Let your child know what your expectations are and explain why the rules exist.
- An important part of parenting is rewarding your child for good behavior and for following the rules.
- Instilling the right values in your child takes time. Disciplining your child should be about teaching your child self-discipline.
- Be a role model for your child as they grow up to be responsible, respectful, well-adjusted and loving adults.
- Walk away or reach out to a support if you feel yourself losing control.